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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## Educational News and Editorial Comment

### CONFERENCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The installation of President Kinley, of the University of Illinois, was made the occasion of a conference, lasting two days, on federal support for education and a federal department of education. The conference brought together a very unusual body of speakers, including a number of representatives of land-grant colleges and state universities, Congressman Towner and Senator Sterling—the sponsors for the bill now before Congress providing for a department of education and for a subsidy of \$100,000,000 for public schools—a representative of the Department of Agriculture, the director of the American Council on Education, and others.

The conference opened with a paper by Dean Davenport, the veteran head of the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois. This paper set forth the history of the new subjects in the curriculum of American colleges and pointed out the influence of federal grants in encouraging the introduction of agriculture and other sciences and the establishment of scientific research.

The second paper was by Dr. S. P. Capen, director of the American Council on Education. Dr. Capen showed that up to 1914 federal grants for education had been given solely for the encouragement of science and research. Since 1914 grants made to education have been loaded with conditions that make for federal control.

The address of President Kinley, which was the third paper of the conference, described in concrete detail the experiences of the University of Illinois in accepting and administering federal funds and pointed out that control must inevitably follow federal grants. The principle of dollar for dollar was discussed as a dangerous method of securing for federal agents influence over state funds as well as over federal grants.

Mr. Allen, representing the Department of Agriculture, described the experiences of the department in administering agricultural funds. He stated that the difficulties which were common in the early years of the grants, especially because of the improper administration of the funds in some quarters, are gradually being eliminated.

President Thompson, of Ohio State University, presented a long series of concrete experiences which he and others have had in dealing with federal grants and concluded, as had President Kinley, that federal control is inevitable where federal funds are accepted. He also pointed out the growing tendency to unload on the federal treasury all sorts of welfare projects.

Senator Sterling made an address in which he reviewed the constitutional justifications for federal grants to all kinds of welfare. He advocated vigorously federal support for education on the ground that the national government is as much concerned in the training of citizens as are the states.

Congressman Towner made a vigorous plea for congressional support in view of the inadequacies of the present educational systems in the several states. He advocated the establishment of a federal department and asserted in the most emphatic terms that he was opposed to any domination of state systems of education by federal agencies.

He made what was perhaps one of the most important practical announcements that has been made publicly about the Towner-Sterling bill. In answer to the criticism that had been made in the course of the general discussion, that the bill now before Congress is a double affair and that the appropriation feature of this bill is not acceptable to many, Judge Towner said that no one need hesitate to support the creation of the department, even if he is

opposed to the grant of money, because the two items have been and are now definitely separated. Congress is now considering, through its committee on the reorganization of the executive departments, the creation of a department of education and is not considering at this time the appropriations.

While this public announcement by Judge Towner will be a disappointment to some, it is a source of genuine satisfaction to many who have found the appropriations feature of the Towner-Sterling bill so defective that they cannot support the bill at all so long as it carries that undesirable freight.

The conference at the University of Illinois was the first general public discussion of all of the aspects of this important matter. The proceedings will be published shortly and should be secured by all who are interested in forming an intelligent opinion of the new policy proposed in the bills that have been so widely advocated but so little discussed.

The proponents of the Towner-Sterling bill will do well to follow the intelligent example of the University of Illinois and provide authoritative information on all aspects of the case, rather than platitudinous demands for general indorsements of the bill by people who have never read it.

#### JUDGING THE COMPETENCY OF TEACHERS

The public press and some of the educational journals announced in brief notes last month that the former superintendent of schools of Fresno, California, had lost in the courts a case in which several teachers were plaintiffs. The teachers held that they had been damaged because Mr. Cross, acting in his official capacity as superintendent, had reported them as professionally incompetent.

The case is evidently one in which every school administrator is interested. If superintendents and principals are to be hailed into court by teachers whom they report as failing in their work, there is likely to be an end of strong, fearless supervision. The fact is that in not a few school systems supervisory officers are today intimidated either directly or indirectly by teachers to such a degree that they do not dare report unfavorably on teachers who are distinctly incompetent. It will be of interest, therefore, to review briefly the facts in the California case.

According to a school law in California, just recently amended, it was necessary to notify teachers before the tenth of June of each year of their failure of re-election; otherwise, their tenure of office continued. In June, 1920, the Fresno Board of Education, which alone under the law has the power of dismissal, notified three teachers in the manner prescribed by law that their services would no longer be required. This action in each instance was based on the official recommendation of the principal of the school in which the teacher worked, of the supervisors of special subjects, and of the superintendent. A motion was properly made, carried, and recorded, notifying the teachers that they would not be reappointed.

As soon as the teachers received this notice there appeared in the Fresno papers an article of which the following is an extract:

Precipitating a conflict between organized teachers of Fresno and the Board of Education which will result either in the recognition of teachers' unions by the board or the overthrow of the entire union movement, the city Board of Education has requested the resignation of three pioneer city teachers who have taken the lead in the organization of the local unions.

The three teachers received notification of their virtual discharge Monday according to an announcement made today. In its request for the resignation the Board of Education did not specify that the action was taken against the teachers as members of the union. Union officials brand the board's action, however, as an overt act against the union movement, stating that by the request for the resignation of the union leaders the board has finally shown its opposition to the organization of teachers.

In the course of the newspaper discussion which followed, the superintendent, against whom suit was finally brought, gave an interview in which he said,

The dismissal of the three teachers was authorized by the Board of Education solely because of their professional incapacity to fill their positions.

In every instance an adverse report was given me by the principals and supervisors. The matter was thoroughly discussed by the principals with me and in some instances there was further discussion in the presence of the board.

The whole case rests upon their professional relationship to the school system and the quality of their work. In no instances, when their cases were under discussion, was the word union mentioned.

Two cases have been under discussion for two years, but we have hesitated to take action, hoping that the teachers under question would make a change

for the better. The third teacher was more recent, but her work proved entirely unsatisfactory.

Their affiliations with the union had nothing to do with their dismissal. Their cases were considered solely upon their professional and personal qualifications.

The trial hinged on the question of the correctness of the statement that the teachers were "dismissed." The teachers contended that they were not dismissed, but merely failed of re-election, and it was on this issue that the superintendent lost the case and the teachers were awarded one dollar damages.

The matter of the dismissal of the three teachers was the point of issue in the last school-board election, held in April, 1921. The old board, so called, was opposed by a union ticket, four candidates of which were favorable to the unionization of teachers. In the political advertising which appeared in the public press during the campaign, the members of the old board over their signatures suggested that it was not advisable to make a change in the administration of the schools at that time. The voters assumed that the old board was opposed to the policy of unionization of teachers and to the affiliation of teachers with the American Federation of Labor, although it had officially expressed the belief in teachers' organizations and in the right of the teachers to take part in the administration of the schools and in formulating school policies. After the old board had been re-elected by a convincing majority, political pressure was brought to bear upon it and the superintendent was not re-elected, although no reason was given for this action.

Reduced to simplest terms, the facts are these: A board of education, acting on the professional recommendation of principals, supervisors, and superintendent, failed to re-elect three teachers. The reports of the principals, of the supervisors, and of the superintendent show that the teachers in question were ranked the lowest in the system. The truth of the statement that these teachers failed of re-election for the reason stated was never disproved, but the right of the superintendent to state the board's reasons and to use the word "dismiss" instead of the words "failed of re-election" was the basis of the suit.

This case teaches, as does many another incident of school history, that supervisory officers will have to organize some kind of a professional association or they will from time to time be caught in the machinery and their effectiveness in serving the public will be seriously curtailed.

#### EXPERT CO-OPERATION WITH SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Los Angeles has taken a step which is the natural sequel of the survey movement. That movement grew out of the need for expert criticism of existing school conditions. In some cases the criticism was so negative in its character as to disturb rather than help the school system to which it was applied. Furthermore, the surveys of city systems were sometimes so comprehensive that they brought to the school officials and the citizens a budget of suggestions too elaborate to be acted on intelligently within a reasonable period.

The survey is now to be followed by a period of constructive co-operation between school systems and experts through which co-operation the system will attack at one time one aspect of its organization and thus work out a single line of reconstruction.

The announcement made by the central offices of the Los Angeles schools to the teachers of that system is as follows:

The Los Angeles city schools have taken another long step forward in securing the services of Dr. J. Franklin Bobbitt, noted curriculum expert and internationally known educator, to revise and reorganize the courses of study of the twenty-three local high schools. He will spend three months, beginning January 1, working with the local Department of Psychology and Educational Research on this problem.

During the past ten years the science of curriculum construction has developed rapidly. Courses of study are being given a scientific basis. Bobbitt is the pioneer and leader in this field. His first work was as a member of the commission which organized the model educational system of the Philippine Islands.

Concerning the need for curriculum reorganization, Bobbitt says: "As the world presses eagerly forward toward the accomplishment of new things, education also must advance no less swiftly. It must provide the intelligence and the aspirations necessary for the advance and for stability and consistency in holding the gains. Education must take a pace set, not by itself, but by social progress.

"The present program of public education was mainly formulated during the simpler conditions of the nineteenth century. In details it has been improved. In fundamentals it is not greatly different. A program never designed for the present day has been inherited.

"Any inherited system, good for its time, when held to after its day, hampers social progress. It is not enough that the system, fundamentally unchanged in plan and purpose, be improved in details. In education this has been done in conspicuous degree. Our schools today are better than ever before. Teachers are better trained. Supervision is more adequate. Buildings and equipment are enormously improved. Effective methods are being introduced, and time is being economized. Improvements are visible on every hand. And yet to do the nineteenth-century task better than it was then done is not necessarily to do the twentieth-century task."

#### THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENCE

From the school paper of Cleveland, which evidently derives its information from the president of the Department of Superintendence, Superintendent Jones, we copy the following:

About the biggest event of the year for American public-school administrators is the annual meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the N.E.A., the initials standing conveniently for National Education Association.

Generally this meeting is referred to as simply "The N.E.A. meeting." Winter before last it was held in Cleveland, and all the city's teachers had opportunity to see at first hand something of the impressive program. Everybody was there.

Superintendents, big, little, and medium; deans of colleges and normal schools, federal and state educational officials, textbook salesmen, child-welfare workers, Boy Scout and Girl Scout captains, community-center enthusiasts, anti-cigaretteers, manufacturers of school furniture and supplies, researchers, supervisors, teachers' agency people, uplifters, reformers, motion-picture salesmen and visual education prophets, teachers' council advocates—in a word, everybody whose professional or personal or even mercenary interest prompted attendance.

Members of the Department of Superintendence were quite lost in the throngs representing some fifty other organizations which in the course of time had hitched on to the Department of Superintendence.

There were inspiring addresses. There were great exhibits of school accomplishments, most of them from the Cleveland schools. There were showings of all sorts of school equipment and paraphernalia. There was confusion and hubbub, the natural result of a joint meeting of so many interests.

The ship was waterlogged. Nearly fifty organizations were attached to the Department of Superintendence.

Mr. E. U. Graff, president of the meeting, appointed a committee, of which Mr. R. G. Jones was named chairman, to work out a new plan for the election of officers—a comparatively minor matter.

The committee, in reviewing the whole situation, decided to present in addition to the plan for election of officers a plan for the reorganization of the department—a reorganization which would limit the number of organizations affiliating with the department, provide a policy to finance the Department so that it would be self-supporting, and improve the business methods.

Members of that committee were, besides Mr. Jones, Supt. E. C. Hartwell, of Buffalo; Dr. A. E. Winship, editor of the *Journal of Education*: Supt. J. W. Sexton, of Lansing, Michigan. Their resolution was presented at the department's meeting at Atlantic City February last and was there adopted. More than that, it so expressed the feeling of the superintendents that the chairman of the committee, R. G. Jones, was elected president of the Department of Superintendence, to serve until February, 1922.

Thus, as the proponent of the measure, he was given the opportunity to carry out the plan embodied in the resolution.

The immediate task before Mr. Jones, following the election, was to obtain the approval of the parent body, the N.E.A. itself, on the changes in the N.E.A. constitution effected by the resolution. Without that approval the reorganization could not take place. The approval was given at the meeting of the N.E.A. at Des Moines last July. Naturally, a number of the organizations with voting power in the N.E.A. and enjoying affiliation with the Department of Superintendence, did not want to forego the affiliation.

But the resolution was approved and finally put in effect last summer. It provided for better financing of the department through power to assess supplementary membership dues; for better administration, through the creation of an executive committee; for the right to determine its own membership; for a great reduction in the number of affiliated organizations. The one end of all this was to maintain the department as a professional educational organization.

To determine what organizations should be recognized and provided for at the February, 1922, meeting of the department a questionnaire was sent to one hundred city and state superintendents, selected country-wide, the number including practically all big city superintendents. Their replies indicated that nearly forty of the previously affiliated organizations should be dropped and that a dozen should be retained and be provided for on the department's program.

The executive committee in working out a basis for the selection of groups to be affiliated, elected to admit those having administrative or supervisory service or those engaged in teacher training. The dozen are: National Council of Education, National Council of State Departments of Education, Department of Rural Education, National Association of High-School Supervisors and Inspectors, Department of Vocational Education, City Training School

Section, National Association of Directors of Educational Research, National Association of Secondary-School Principals, National Council of Primary Education, National Society of College Teachers of Education, National Society for the Study of Education, and Department of Elementary-School Principals.

These organizations will be provided for on the program of the meeting next February in Chicago. At that time, an executive session of all regular members will be held on Monday afternoon, and an official vote will be taken on any organization or group desiring to affiliate with the Department of Superintendence.

"There is nothing to prevent any organization from meeting in Chicago at the same time the Department of Superintendence is in session there," says Mr. Jones. "This is a free country. However, the department is now organized so that its business will not be clogged by the affairs of dozens of other organizations."

The resolution which brought about such a radical change in the Department of Superintendence, most important educational body in the nation, contained the following points, all of which now exist as amendments in the constitution of the N.E.A.:

**"AMENDMENT TO SECTION 2, ARTICLE V, OF BY-LAWS**

"Each department shall have the right to fix the qualifications of its members for the purpose of electing officers and transacting the other business of the department; provided active members of the Association, and no others, shall be eligible to such department membership, and provided also that all active members of the Association shall be permitted to attend the professional programs and discussions of any department."

**"AMENDMENT TO SECTION 5, ARTICLE V, BY ADDING WORDS**

"Any department may provide for the creation of an executive committee and assign to it any duties consistent with the purposes of the department and the Charter and By-Laws of the Association."

**"AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6, ARTICLE V, BY ADDING WORDS**

"Provided no department shall establish an office outside of the general headquarters of the Association without the consent of the executive committee of the Association."

**"NEW SECTION TO ARTICLE V, TO BE KNOWN AS SECTION 9**

"Any department, by a two-thirds vote of those voting at any regular business meeting, may levy a membership fee to supplement its allowance from the Association. Such membership fees shall be paid to the secretary of the department who shall transmit them monthly to the secretary of the Association. Such funds shall be added to the department's allowance from the Association and shall be used for the work of said department only, and

shall be disbursed upon the recommendation of the executive officers of the department in the same manner as other funds of the Association are disbursed."

These amendments to the constitution of the parent body naturally apply to all N.E.A. departments.

#### AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE COURSE FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN

At the Virginia Polytechnic Institute the president and faculty have organized a course which is designed to introduce Freshmen to their college work by a discussion of the intellectual and personal problems which a Freshman is likely to encounter.

The class meets twice a week and requires no outside preparation. It is, however, a credit course and every member of the class is required to pass an examination at the end of the term. The purpose of the course is described in the following terms:

To help the new student fit himself into the college life and make the best of opportunities offered him. To aid the student in choosing a vocation and the course of instruction which will best fit him for his vocation.

The instructors are described in the following paragraph:

The class will be in charge of the president, assisted by the various members of the faculty and college officials. When possible for him to do so, the president will be present at all sessions of the class, but if he is not present the instructor assigned for the day will take charge as in any of his other classes. Instructors must record the attendance each day and also note against individuals inattention, as far as practicable, in order that this may be used in making up grades for the term—attendance, attention, and proficiency in the final test will enter into the making up of grades. Students may be required to take notes in the class.

The subjects to be taken up during the first part of the course are somewhat general in character. Thus, at the first exercise the president of the college discusses such problems as the importance of professional training, the opportunities offered at the institution, student relationships and faculty relationships, the use of work time and leisure time, and physical, mental, and spiritual recreation. Following this introductory discussion are lectures on the principles and methods of study, economy of time in reading and studying, taking notes, arrangement of notebooks, and the use of the library.

Following the general lectures the various departments of the institution are given an opportunity to present in a general way the significance of their work. There are lectures in the general fields of animal husbandry, applied biology, electrical engineering, and so forth.

While the student is pursuing this course he is called upon to give to the officers of the institution a body of information with regard to his personal preparation and his professional expectations. This material is worked over in detail so that the institution may advise the student intelligently with regard to his selection of courses and other types of activity.

#### A VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MAGAZINE

The following announcement is published:

For a number of years the National Society for Vocational Education has considered the possibility of issuing a magazine devoted exclusively to the interests of vocational education. Plans for the publication of such a magazine have been perfected, and it is hoped that the first issue will appear on or before January 1, 1922. At the present time there are over ten thousand teachers engaged in vocational education work throughout the United States, and a magazine of this type will fill a wide demand in the field of vocational education.

The committee in charge of the publication of the magazine plans to issue a magazine that will deal with the general problems in the field of vocational education and have departments to be devoted to the following types of work: (1) agricultural education, (2) commercial education, (3) industrial education, (4) home economics education, (5) training in industry, and (6) part-time and continuation schools.

The following persons have agreed to serve on the General Editorial Board:

David Snedden, Teachers College, New York City.

Representing industrial education—C. A. Prosser, director, Dunwoody Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Representing agricultural education—George A. Works, New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, New York.

Representing home economics education—Mildred Weigley, chief Division of Home Economics Education, University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Representing commercial education—F. G. Nichols, state director of commercial education, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Representing part-time and continuation schools—R. J. Leonard, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Representing training in industry—C. R. Allen, Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D.C.

This board will be responsible for the general editorial policy of the magazine.

Detailed information in regard to the magazine may be secured by writing to the National Society for Vocational Education, 140 West 42d Street, New York City.

The *School Review* always welcomes to the field of educational journalism any well-sponsored enterprise which promises to contribute to the promotion of educational thinking and to progressive activity among school officers. It will gladly welcome any progressive journal which is dedicated to the promotion of American education along industrial or technical lines.

This announcement arouses, however, something akin to anxiety. It contains a phrase which may be wholly without undesirable implications, but it reeks with reminiscences of those earlier days when powerful interests tried to divide the American school system against itself. Why should we have a "magazine devoted exclusively to the interests of vocational education"? Is it meant that we need a specialized magazine such as we have in the *English Journal* or in *School Science and Mathematics*? If so, all is well. These departmental journals serve their day and generation by promoting harmony within an all-inclusive school organization. But if that word "exclusively" is to mean the beginning of more campaigns for more Smith-Hughes Laws and more propaganda for dual school systems, then perhaps it is well that the promoters of this new enterprise be reminded that vocational education as an exclusive affair has not made good and never can make good. Nor will America accept any program of narrowly exclusive vocational education.